

Concerning need of adequate inspection of foods canned in foreign countries.

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

To the Editor:—At Doctor Geiger's direction, I am sending you the attached copy of an open letter to health officers. This letter has been sent to all state and territorial health officers and to the health officers of one hundred of the larger cities of the United States, and to a number of executives within the canning industry.

Doctor Geiger thought you might be interested in seeing a copy of the communication, inasmuch as it represents an attempt to secure new legislation which will permit of adequate supervision and regulation over canned products of both domestic and foreign origin.

On authority from the Director of Public Health.

Sincerely,

JACQUES P. GRAY, M. D.,
Assistant Director of Public Health.

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CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

December 8, 1936.

An Open Letter to Health Officers:

From time to time, outbreaks of botulism have been traced to foreign canned products. Botulism has occurred in California in the past year in two outbreaks, involving fourteen people and causing, among these, six deaths. In one instance, the source of infection, epidemiologically, was traced to antipasto, a vegetable-fish product packed in one of the southern European countries; in the other outbreak, clams packed in an oriental country were responsible.

As a result of these two incidents, I addressed a communication to representatives of the United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Drug Administration, pointing out the desirability of adequate supervision over foreign canned products coming into this country and the justification for establishing safeguards similar to those required in this country in the packing of such products, so that the American consumer desiring canned products of foreign origin might be assured of the safety of such products since they would be packed under conditions involving techniques comparable to those followed in American canneries. In his reply, the Chief of the Division of State Cooperation, W. S. Frisbie, stated that existing legislation does not grant authority for the establishment of standards for canned products coming in from foreign countries. He also pointed out that the "present action and control of imported goods is quite as rigid and along the same lines as that exercised over domestic products"; also, that as a matter of fact "there are no provisions, under the Federal Food and Drug Act, which confer any authority upon the Food and Drug Administration to insist upon certain standards of processing for canned goods in foreign countries or in domestic commerce." In other words, it appears that the present high standards of canned products packed in the United States of America have been developed as the result of more or less self-imposed rigid requirements and standards as promulgated by the canning industry itself with the assistance of its consultants.

Under these circumstances it would seem that there is a definite need for widespread development of public opinion favorable to suitable legislation, giving broad powers and genuine authority to the United States Department of Agriculture or other suitable federal agency, permitting adequate supervision of commercially prepared canned food products whether packed in foreign or domestic canneries. The American consumer certainly deserves a safe canned product at all times and from all sources.

May I have your comment on this subject? Your assistance in developing public opinion favorable to worthwhile action in Congress, I am sure, would be helpful to your congressmen and Senators.

Sincerely,

J. C. GEIGER, M. D.,
Director of Public Health.

Concerning contribution of California Medical Association to Lane Library.

December 22, 1936.

Dr. F. C. Warnshuis,
Secretary, California Medical Association,
450 Sutter Street,
San Francisco.

My dear Doctor Warnshuis:

It is so fine to be able to end the year's bookkeeping for the library by adding the check for \$122.50 that you have just sent to us. We certainly appreciate the help that we have received from the California Medical Association.

All of the Library staff send many thanks and holiday greetings.

Very truly yours,

LOUISE OPHÜLS,
Medical Librarian.

Concerning prizes for essays on thyroid gland.

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
STUDY OF GOITER

November 20, 1936.

To the Editor:—The American Association for the Study of Goiter again offers the Van Meter Prize Award of \$300 and two honorable mentions for the best essays submitted concerning experimental and clinical investigations relative to the thyroid gland. This award will be made at the discretion of the Society at its next annual meeting, to be held in Detroit, Michigan, June 14, 15, and 16.

The competing manuscripts, which should not exceed 3,000 words in length, must be presented in English and a typewritten double-spaced copy sent to the corresponding secretary, Dr. W. Blair Mosser, 133 Biddle Street, Kane, Pennsylvania, not later than April 1, 1937. Manuscripts received after this date will be held for competition the following year or returned at the author's request.

The committee who will review the manuscripts is composed of men well known in the fields of research and clinical investigation of problems related to the thyroid gland. At the last annual meeting of the Society the award for the year 1936 was presented to Dr. Edward Uhlenhuth, University of Maryland Medical School, Baltimore, Maryland, in appreciation of his manuscript entitled "Isolation of the Thyreoactivator Hormone from the Anterior Lobe of the Bovine Pituitary Gland." The committee also awarded honorable mention to Dr. E. Cowles Andrus and Dr. Donald McEachern, Johns Hopkins University and Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, for their manuscript entitled "On the Nature of the Increased Metabolism in Hyperthyroidism."

The Association will publish the manuscript receiving the prize award in their annual proceedings, and reserve a place on the program of the annual meeting for presentation of the manuscript by the author, if it is possible for him to attend. This will not prevent its publication, however, in any journal selected by the author.

Very truly yours,

W. BLAIR MOSSER, M. D.,
Corresponding Secretary.

Concerning editorial on hospitalization plans.

To the Editor:—In your editorial, Hospitalization Plans in California, in your December issue, you write:

Of course, certain matters having to do with clinical laboratory and x-ray services, which today are everywhere accepted and demanded as concomitants of hospitalization, may need satisfactory adjustment; but the difficulties in regard thereto should not be unsurmountable.

The meaning and intent of this sentence is quite clear to those familiar with the subject, but since it will be read by many who are not, it would seem that the following facts are worth bringing to the attention of your readers. This editorial appears in the official journal of the California Medical Association; the House of Delegates of that Association has rendered its belief in no uncertain